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## DEPARTMENT OF RED CROSS NURSING

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### THE SCHOOLS OF NURSING IN THE OLD WORLD

#### III. THE POZNAN SCHOOL

**P**OZNAN is the Polish name for the city which under the German occupation was known as "Posen." Here is located the second of the schools of nursing sponsored by the American Red Cross Nursing Service in Poland.

In the Poznan School the situation is so wholly different from that which obtains in Warsaw that comparisons are quite impossible, though the Warsaw School, with its advantages, could be likened to some of our eastern institutions of learning, while the struggling school at Poznan suggests some of our small western colleges. Difficulties that to less dauntless souls might have seemed insurmountable confronted the American nurses. In order to obtain the hospital affiliations which were regarded as indispensable they were compelled at the outset to take over the entire nursing care, day and night, of the hospital, averaging 40 or more patients daily, assume entire responsibility for all the hospital work, including the operating room, and with no assistance but that afforded by the new pupils and "nurse helpers" almost wholly untrained. The housekeeping,—laundry, dietary department, etc.—was taken over by the Catholic Sisters. The task of transforming the hospital, vermin-ridden, lacking in plumbing facilities, in linen, adequate dishes, trays,—equipment of every sort,—into one approximating American standards of cleanliness, sanitation, order and convenience was monumental.

The personnel of the Poznan School originally included Ita M. McDonnell, director of the Department of Nursing, a graduate of the St. Raphael Hospital Training School, St. Cloud, Minn.; Augusta E. Mettel, a graduate of St. Mary's Hospital Training School, Minneapolis, and formerly a public health nurse for the Polish Gray Samaritan Commission; Emily Skorupa, a graduate of St. Mary of Nazareth's Hospital Training School, Chicago. Mary Suchowska, of the original staff, a native Pole, left the first of the year to be married and was temporarily succeeded by Lena M. Johnson, a graduate of Wesley Memorial Hospital, Chicago. Marha M. Rhode afterward took Miss Johnson's place. Like Miss Skorupa, she is a graduate of St. Mary of Nazareth's. With the exception of Miss McDonnell all the nurses are of Polish blood and were chosen for their particular fitness for service in Poland.

The curriculum, hours of duty, requirements for admission, etc., are practically the same at both the Poznan and the Warsaw Schools. The ten pupils with whom the Poznan School opened are largely from families rich in traditions of culture and service to humanity. One is a doctor's daughter, one a doctor's niece, one a banker's daughter, one a University student just ready to take up the study of medicine, one a graduate of the Krakow School, a short course for native health workers, and one,—who has proved an invaluable asset, but over whose admission there was considerable doubt, because she was 42,—very much beyond the age limit,—is the wife of a physician. She lives with the pupils as one of them and because of her education, refinement and more mature age, she has been able to interest them in something besides their work when they are off duty.

The opening of the School took place on November 10, 1921. Mass was celebrated by Father Rader in the chapel of the hospital and after reading the Gospel lesson,—the story of the Good Samaritan, he preached a sermon especially applicable to the new school. The guests were given an opportunity to inspect the hospital, going later to the nurses' home at Ulica Grottgera where breakfast was served and addresses were given by representatives of the local organizations. Among the American Red Cross personnel present were Stella S. Mathews, Director of Nursing Service in Poland; Helen Bridge, Director of the Warsaw School of Nursing; Dr. R. M. Taylor, Director of the A. R. C. in Poland, and Mr. Philips, chief of the publicity department.

From the beginning an enormous amount of work had to be assumed by the American nurses and as a result very little time was left for preliminary training and much less for the practical training and supervision that are so highly desirable. Moreover the staff of four was diminished the first of the current year when Miss Suchowska left to be married. One of the American nurses had therefore to continue to do night duty for a considerable period of time until one of the pupils or another trained nurse could be found to supervise this work.

Miss Hay wrote after her recent tour of inspection:

In view of the tremendously heavy burdens our nurses have carried from the first in this enterprise, it is most gratifying to find how much enthusiasm and interest they still have for the project. The force, however, is too small under the difficult circumstances. Miss Skorupa has given as much of the practical training as there has been time for. Miss Mettel is on night duty, she and Miss Skorupa alternating every few weeks. Miss McDonnell is handicapped in comparison by her inability to speak either German or Polish.

The hospital is a most pleasing exception to the native hospitals one finds in some of the European countries and Miss Mathews states that the transformation is little short of marvelous. The patients are well cared for and happy

and perhaps no better indication could be given of the success of our nurses than is shown in the fact that the Catholic Sisters have not only been most coöperative but strongly endorse the work of the nurses and the good care these patients are receiving from the new pupils under their care and supervision.

I met a number of physicians interested in the hospital, including the chief of the railway service, the chief of the departments, medical and surgical. They were warm in their praises of the work the nurses had done and begged that they be left on long enough to insure the establishment of a good school. On the day I arrived at the nurses' home I met Dr. Zniniewicz, a woman physician, president of the Polish Red Cross and some others of the Polish Red Cross and University staff. They also spoke most appreciatively of the nurses' work and accomplishment thus far.

The pupils compare very favorably with the group at Warsaw, although the situation with them, as with the instructors, is so vastly different. In Warsaw there had been no hospital work at the time of my visit, consequently no chance for bodily weariness in the same degree. The Warsaw pupils, as I witnessed, know how to play as well as to work, but the pupils in the Poznan School have had too much hard and unusual work thrust upon them, together with lectures and lessons to have left any time or inclination for play or relaxation. This condition which obtained at the time of my visit we shall hope to change. The pupils, however, manifest the greatest interest and enthusiasm for their work, notwithstanding it has been so strenuous.

The home is attractive, although the pupils' rooms for the most part have been altogether without heat.<sup>1</sup> Extra rooms are being prepared in the adjoining apartment provided with stoves. The food is plain but ample.

Miss McDonnell has done most efficient work under extremely difficult circumstances. The hospital work and hospital care were there to be done and the cheerfulness with which these women have carried on is deserving of the greatest praise. It is a worthy undertaking and ought to prove a model for similar institutions where it is desired there shall be a good nurses' school and at the same time the Church be left in control of some of the hospital management.

#### GENEVA CONFERENCE

**D**ELEGATES representing 34 different countries attended the second biennial meeting of the General Council of the League of Red Cross Societies held in Geneva from March 28 to April 1. In the absence of Henry P. Davison, chairman of the Board of Governors of the League, Dr. A. Ross Hill, vice-chairman of the A. R. C. in charge of foreign operations, presided. The American delegates included Helen Scott Hay, Director of A. R. C. Nursing Service in Europe; Ernest P. Bicknell, A. R. C. Commissioner to Europe; Robert P. Lane, European Director, Junior American Red Cross; Dr. A. C. Burnham, Medical Director, A. R. C. European Commission, and Dr. J. Mason Knox, Field Medical Director, alternate. Stella S. Mathews, Director of A. R. C. Nursing Service in Poland, was present by invitation.

The League has restated its programme for the next two years,

<sup>1</sup> This in a climate where the temperature remains for weeks at ten to twenty below zero!

which will be concentrated chiefly upon the development of public health nursing, popular health instruction and Junior Red Cross activities. The delegates unanimously agreed that these three fields relate most closely to the vital problems common to all countries.

Following an able presentation by Miss Hay of the importance of the organization of suitable schools of nursing as a fundamental preliminary to public health nursing, resolutions were prepared and presented urging the League to stimulate the organization of schools of nursing of the first order in the countries of their members' societies where such institutions were lacking.

Recommendation was made by Miss Olmsted of the permanent organization of the International Public Health Course in London with branches for the South American countries, perhaps in San Francisco or New York, inspection of the various fields where graduates of this course are at work, etc.

Efforts to standardize Red Cross nurses met with decided opposition and in the resolution finally adopted it was merely stated that the recommendation for definitely standardized professional training be looked into during the coming year.

Removal of the headquarters from Geneva to Paris was also decided upon for reasons of economy and accessibility, Paris being a more convenient meeting place for delegates from all parts of the world than Geneva.

In a most informing letter on her impressions of the Geneva Conference Miss Hay writes:

It was felt on the whole that the meetings were thoroughly successful and the results obtained quite as much or more than had been anticipated. There was a good exhibit which included such photographs of our several nurses' schools as you have already received. There were all the social functions arranged for us that we possibly had time for. \* \* \* Besides Miss Mathews and the two nurses of the League,—Miss Olmsted and Miss Ledyard,—the only other nurses present were Miss Perron of the C. A. R. D., and two visiting nurses, one, Miss Nathan, from New Zealand and the other from Holland.

### ITEMS

Two A. R. C. nurses have recently been sent through the Paris office to the Near East Relief Headquarters in Constantinople. These are Elizabeth Hollenbeck, who sailed April 9 for the Caucasus, and Emily Petty.

Mrs. Betty McCreery and Mabel Clark arrived in Constantinople, April 1, and left for the Caucasus April 7. These also are Red Cross nurses recently assigned to the Near East Relief through the office of the A. R. C. Nursing Service in Washington.